

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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New Year is a time of celebration. A time spent with friends and loved ones over good food and conversations or while watching beautiful fireworks in the sky or on your screen. This is an important occasion celebrated not only in the Philippines but all around the world. For some, this is also a time to make new commitments and resolutions. As C. S. Lewis once said, *"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."* This is the reason why for most people, New Year marks a new beginning.

As we start a new year, I encourage you to take time to pause and reflect on how the Lord moved so mightily in your life the past year, to list and recount the many blessings that He has bestowed upon you, and to move forward and anticipate the things that He will still do in your midst with joy and confidence. Joy that is anchored upon Christ Himself and confidence that comes from the truth that the same God that we have last year, is the same God that we have today, and will continue to be the same God for 2023. So, keep on holding on and trusting God and His Promises!

## BE STILL AND KNOW I AM GOD

Every year, before the year

ends, I would pray and ask God for a verse that I can hold on to for the coming year. For 2022, it was Isaiah 41:10, *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* This practice has helped me over the years to keep my eyes on the Lord as I continue to journey with Him and face life's challenges. Having a verse that I can go back to serves not only as encouragement but even as a rebuke at times.

As I await my 2023 verse, the Lord allowed me to experience a series of unfortunate events, I had a problem with my grades because of a miscommunication with the professor, I had to undergo a series of laboratory exams for health reasons, and then my family and I had a usual Christmas celebration due to restrictions because my sister and other relatives were inflicted with covid. Amid all the thinking, worrying, and stress that comes with these, the Lord caused me to quiet my heart and placed this verse in my heart, *"Be still, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"* -Psalm 46:10

This is a familiar and often-quoted verse. To put this verse into context, this tells us of God's great power to protect

Israel against enemies who attack her (46:1-7). The phrase "be still" can mean relax, let go, or stop. These words all imply surrender or a release from striving. However, this does not mean "to sit and do nothing" as this not only involves surrendering but trusting God who is their source of refuge and strength.

This verse spoke to me and gave me peace that amid challenges, battles, or struggles, I am to cease striving, surrender, and trust God knowing that He is God! This did not only give me peace but confidence as well knowing that no matter what life throws at me this year, I am to be still not simply because I can or because of my own effort but because I have a God who is with me and who will see me through.

I pray that you were encouraged and reminded through this verse as I am. As we move forward to another year, know that we have a God! May the blessings of Christ be with you in all the ups and downs of life. And may you continue to live a life of faith and surrender - a life that is pleasing and glorifying before God all year long.✱